



From a distance the highwall miner looks more like a paddlewheel boat than a piece of coal mining equipment.



It's not a garage door, but the opening left after the highwall miner has extracted the coal from the highwall of a surface pit.



An end loader lifts beams that extend the cutting head into the seam. Two augers in each beam pull coal from the face.

Surface Mining

HIGHWALL MINING EQUIPMENT



After coal is mined from the floor of a surface pit, a highwall miner removes more coal by boring into the highwall of the pit. Approximately 2,300 tons of coal is extracted from each cut. Cuts are approximately 11 feet wide, 800 feet deep and spaced 6 feet apart.



Sitting in a cab atop the miner, the operator carefully monitors coal seam conditions and adjusts the cutting head.



The large wheel holds the power cables that attach to the cutting head deep inside the highwall.



Looking down from the catwalk at the beams going into the highwall. The trough on the right holds the power cable.



The miner sits on tracks that are used to move it from place to place.



Coal moves through the bottom of the miner on a conveyor and is stockpiled at the rear.



An end loader loads the freshly mined coal into trucks that carry it to the preparation plant.



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